

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for cooking a food product, comprising the steps of:
conveying the food product along an elongated path;
exposing the food product to superheated steam from adjacent the path for a first period of time; and
exposing the food product to saturated steam from adjacent the path for a second period of time.
2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the food product is browned using superheated steam in an environment of about 540° to about 1500° F prior to the conveying step.
3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the food product is browned using superheated steam in an environment of about 540° to about 1500° F after the exposing steps.
4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the saturated steam has a temperature of 160° to 212° F.
5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the superheated steam has a temperature greater than 212°F and less than 750°F.
6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the superheated steam is exposed to the food product at a distance of about four inches from a surface of the food product.
7. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the saturated steam is exposed to the food product from sides of the path.
8. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the food product is at least one of meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetables.
9. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of adding external heat to further cook the food product.

10. The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the steps occur in a steam cabinet.
11. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first period of time is about 2-6 minutes.
12. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the second period of time is about 4-18 minutes.
13. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the superheated steam source is superheated by moving it through a radiant wall oven.
14. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first and second time periods overlap.
15. A device for cooking a food product, comprising:
 - a conveyor for conveying the food product along an elongated path;
 - a superheated steam supply for exposing the food product to superheated steam from adjacent the path; and
 - a saturated steam supply for exposing the food product to saturated steam from adjacent the path.
16. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the saturated steam has a temperature of 160° to 212° F.
17. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the superheated steam has a temperature greater than 212°F and less than 750°F.
18. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the superheated steam supply is spaced about four inches from a surface of the food product.
19. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the saturated steam is spaced about four inches from a surface of the food product.
20. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the superheated steam supply is located above and below the food product.

21. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the saturated steam supply is located at a side of the conveyor.
22. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the food product is at least one of meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetables.
23. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the device is a steam cabinet.
24. The device as recited in claim 15, further comprising an external heat source to further cook the food product.
25. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein a dwell time for the food product exposed to the superheated steam is about 2-6 minutes.
26. The method as recited in claim 15, wherein a dwell time for the food product exposed to the saturated steam is about 4-18 minutes.
27. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the superheated steam source is superheated by exposing it to a radiant wall oven.
28. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the superheated steam supply comprises an upper plurality of tubes extending above the conveyor and a lower plurality of tubes extending below the conveyor.
29. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein the saturated steam supply comprises a plurality of tubes extending on the left side of the conveyor, and a plurality of tubes extending on the right side of the conveyor.
30. The device as recited in claim 29, wherein the number of tubes in each of the left and right side pluralities is two.
31. The device as recited in claim 28, wherein each of the tubes includes a plurality of evenly-spaced slots.

32. The device as recited in claim 29, wherein each of the tubes includes a plurality of evenly-spaced slots.

33. The device as recited in claim 30, wherein one of the two tubes is located about 4" above the conveyor, and the other of the tubes is located about 9" above the conveyor.

34. The device as recited in claim 15, wherein a combined temperature of the superheated and saturated steam in the device is about 300° F.